DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 155 762 CS 502 149

AUTHOR Jenkins, Mercilee M.
TITLE Toward a Model of Human Leadership.
PUB DATE Apr 78
NOTE 15p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Communication Association (Chicago, Illinois, April 25-29, 1978)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Females; *Group Behavior; *Group Dynamics; Group Norms; Group Status; Group Structure; Informal Leadership; Interaction Process Analysis; *Leadership; *Models; Research Needs; Sex (Characteristics); *Sex Role; Sex Stereotypes; Speech Communication

ABSTRACT

The literature on sex-related differences in leadership behavior was reviewed in order to explore underlying factors. Currently there exist several models of male leadership in small groups, but no models of human leadership which represent the experiences of women in same sex and mixed sex groups. Key considerations for constructing such a model were identified, including the following: (1) because of social status women do not have equal access to small group leadership; (2) sex is a diffuse status characteristic which ordinarily results in higher incidence of male leadership in mixed groups and which dictates different strategies for assumption of female leadership; and (3) female verbal and nonverbal style is seen as emotional and deferential, but to adopt the male style is regarded as aggressive and unfeminine. Task performance data indicated that the effects of gender status can be minimized if the woman is recognized as competent to lead and if her leadership behavior is seen as appropriate for her in the situation. In female groups, leadership appears to rotate rather than to become established hierarchically as in men's groups. Research is needed with all female groups and in contexts that minimize the impact of gender role expectations. (DF)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED155762

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

Toward a Model of Human Leadership

Presented at the International Communication Association, April, 1978

Mercilee M. Jenkins
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Mercilee M. Jenkins

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC) AND USERS OF THE ERIC SYSTEM."

CS502149

Recently, attention has been drawn to the lack of research on female leadership (Kathryn M. Bartol & D. Anthony Butterfield, 1976; Arlene Eskilson & Mary Glen Wiley, 1976; Lawrence B. Rosenfeld & Gene D. Fowler, 1976; Lee Jenkins & Cheris Kramer, 1978; Janet Yerby, 1975). In the past, studies of leadership have focused predominantly on how men lead in small task or problem solving groups in the laboratory and in naturalistic settings, such as business and military service. The criteria used to define and evaluate leadership, thus have been determined by studying men, although these criteria are assumed to be equally applicable to women. Substantial evidence indicates, however, that differential norms of behavior exist for men and women which affect actual leadership, as well as how leadership is perceived and evaluated. The assumption of similarity is akin to an ethnocentric bias where the terms of one culture are used to explain another without investigating the grounds for assuming similarity and understanding difference.

I would like to briefly review the literature on sex related differences in leadership behavior in order to explore the factors underlying these differences. We currently have several models of male leadership in small groups, but we don't have any models of human leadership which accommodate the experiences of women in same and mixed sex groups. I would like to identify the key considerations for constructing such a model. In re-examining our theoretical focus and extending the scope of our research, we will be expanding our knowledge of how leadership functions.

In reviewing the research on sex differences in leadership in small groups, it is important to make a distinction between research whose primary

focus is the investigation of these differences and research that merely reports such findings as fall out from statistical analyses of the data. In the latter, hypothetical reasons for these differences based on common gender stereotypes are often put forth with no attempt at validating such conclusions. In the former, a variety of explanations have been offered. The most frequent has been an adaptation of Bales' task/social or instrumental/expressive differentiation hypothesis. This hypothesis states that leadership behavior tends to be divided along this dimension so that one person in a group is the social leader (taking care of group maintenance) and another person is the task leader (making sure the job gets done). In small groups, women are more likely to be social leaders and men are more li' ly to be task leaders due to gender socialization (B.F. Meeker and Weitzel -O'Neill, 1977). However, rather than considering the impact of gender socialization on the psychology of the individual, we might look at the impact of gender based differential norms of behavior on the sociology of the small group. This can be done by examining the possible effects of these differential norms on an essential and widely agreed upon dimension of leadership, that of influence.

Marvin E. Shaw (1971) defines the leader as the group member who influences the group in the direction he desires to go more than he is influenced by others, regardless of the group goal. Influence can clearly be seen to be related to group norms and values and the perceived status of members based on these criteria. George C. Homans characterized the leader of a group as "the man who comes closest to realizing the norms the group values highest; this conformity gives him his high rank, which attracts people and implies the right to assume control of the group" (Harold H. Frank and Aaron Henor Katcher, 1977, 404). Whatever one's theoretical focus, it seems clear that to lead is to influence others

whether by coercion, legitimized status or position, personal appeal, or validating consensus (Frank & Katcher, 1977). This is the key factor in constructing a paradigm of human leadership. Women by virtue of gender related expectations and status do not have equal access to leadership in small groups because they do not have equal status with men in the larger society.

Our current paradigms of small group leadership fail to account for the impact of external status as defined by gender on the emergence of what has been called leadership behavior. For example, when laboratory studies are done using college students, it is assumed that they all enter the test situation with equal external status because they are all students. There is ample evidence, which will be discussed, to demonstrate that this assumption is false. As Yerby (1975) points out in her study of variables affecting female leadership in small problem solving groups, "gender itself is a potent enough 'message' to significantly influence the outcomes of a leadership situation" (168).

Sex As A Diffuse Status Characteristic

The work of Meeker and Weitzel-O'Neill (1977), Eskilson and Wiley (1976) and Marlaine E. Lockheed and Katherine Patterson Hall (1976) provides substantial support for the theory that sex is a diffuse status characteristic which in the absence of mitigating factors will result in a higher incidence of male leadership in mixed sex groups and will dictate different strategies for the assumption of female leadership in mixed and same sex groups. I will review this research very briefly in order to outline the key points leading to this conclusion and then discuss the implications.

Much previous research supports the hypothesis that external status is a major determinant of the power and prestige order of a task-oriented group (Wally J. Jacobson, 1972; J. Berger, B.P. Cohen & M. Zelditch, 1972; J. Berger, T.L. Conner and M.H. Fisek, 1974). External status affects internal status by means of performance expectations. A person who is perceived as having higher external status is assumed by self and others to be more competent unless information to the contrary is presented. The higher status person's contributions, thus, are more likely to be well received and reinforced. In contrast, the "burden of proof" is on the lower status person to demonstrate competence. The contributions of the lower status person is likely to be perceived as motivated by competitive and selfish desires to enhance status and, therefore, as inappropriate or illegitimate (Meeker & Weitzel-O'Neill, 1977). Eskilson and Wiley (1976) cite the research of Brown (1965), Nussen (1969) and Broverman et al. (1970) to support the common sense assumption that malesness is associated with higher status than femaleness. Marsha B. Jacobson and Walter Koch (1977) review of the literature suggests that "women are evaluated differently from, and very often more negatively than, men even though their respective performances are identical" (149). These evaluations were of general task performance and ability, as well as other indices of leadership.

Thus, women enter any potential leadership situation with a few strikes against them. If a woman attempts leadership in a group, she must demonstrate her competence while at the same time showing that her behavior is motivated by a co-operative desire to promote the success of the group rather than by a selfish desire for personal gain (Meeker & Weitzel-O'Neill, 1977). Given these demands it is not surprising that women are observed

to make more expressive or social contributions to the group than men. It may also explain why in the few studies of women who successfully attained leadership in natural settings or the laboratory, they are rated highly as both task and social leaders by those they lead (John E. Baird, 1976; Kathryn Cirincione-Coles, 1975). Thus, we might hypothesize that it is not that women are incapable of task leadership, but that social leadership must come first if they are to accomplish the former.

Interpersonal Power

Many other studies support and elaborate this perspective on the impact of gender as a diffuse status characteristic on leadership. Paula Johnson's (1976) findings on interpersonal power have particular significance because they indicate that differences in diffuse status based on gender limits what is seen as appropriate behavior for women but not for men. Johnson found that when subjects were asked to evaluate hypothetical situations in which one person attempted to influence another, females were seen as restricted to using certain types of power or influence strategies, which were classified as indirect, personal and helpless. Men could utilize these strategies as well as those more closely identified with the masculine gender role, i.e. direct, concrete and competent. Thus, certainly it is not impossible for women to assume leadership in a task or problem solving group as long as they can prove themselves superior in competence without straying outside the boundaries of gender appropriate behavior which is in some ways antithetical to leadership behavior as it has been traditionally defined (Lockheed & Hall, 1976). Johnson also notes that "feminine" strategies for utilizing power carry negative connotations, such as manipulative and deceptive which have detrimental personal and social consequences.

Communicative Style

The verbal and nonverbal styles associated with femininity and masculinity serve to reinforce the relationship of status and gender. In terms of intonation patterns, women exhibit greater pitch variability and more up inflections at the end of sentences. Pitch variability is associated with greater emotionality. Up terminal inflections are associated with uncertainty, lack of self-confidence and deference (Sally McConnell Ginet, 1974). Thus, a woman in a position of authority is likely to be evaluated negatively if she uses the speech patterns she has learned as a woman. If she adopts male speech patterns, however, she is likely to be seen as overly pushy, aggressive and unfeminine. This is clearly a double bind situation. (It should be noted that the feminine speech patterns could alternately be interpreted as indicating not emotionality but expressiveness and not deference but a desire to encourage response.)

Feminine nonverbal style also places women in the same dilemma. Irene Hanson Frieze and Shiela J. Ramsey (1976) point out that nonverbal behavior which communicates low status and submission also signifies femininity (lowering of the eyes, smiling, etc.). When women exhibit such behavior in groups, are they being followers or just being feminine? If they were to imitate nonverbal behavior associated with masculinity and leadership, it is unlikely that they would receive the same responses as men do.

Leadership Effectiveness

The importance of perceived power or status on leader effectiveness is demonstrated by Rosabeth Kantor's study of the corporate hierarchy (1978). She found that a person perceived as powerful in the organization

only had to express an interest in something being done and it was automatically executed by one of his staff. Those perceived as lower in power and status had to resort to more coercive means to accomplish less and as a consequence were seen as less effective leaders. There are few women in the corporate hierarchy, so that they stand out as females and, thus, are seen as lower in status and competence than men until proven otherwise. Obviously, they are more likely to find themselves in the later position than the former. A vicious cycle is perpetuated; women aren't expected to lead effectively, so their changes of doing so are limited and the stereotypes concerning female leadership are perpetuated.

Task Performance

The data on level of performance and "leader like activity" for men and women in same and mixed sex groups vary widely from test situation to test situation. Lockheed and Hall (1976) conducted two separate studies of student teachers and high school students in small problem solving groups. They found that men and women in same sex groups were equally active verbally and task oriented, but in mixed sex groups, women were less active. If, however, a female subject had previous experience in a same sex group, the number of task-oriented acts she initiated in the mixed sex group was significantly increased. In this context, females were most likely to occupy the number two position in the leadership hierarchy. The importance of these findings, along with those of Eckilson and Wiley (1976) on achieved vs. ascribed female leadership, indicate that the effects of gender status can be minimized if information is provided that indicates women are competent to lead and that leadership behavior is legitimate for them in this context.

Sex Composition of Groups

Substantial evidence indicates that varying the numbers of men and women in a group (independent of verbal interaction) can affect sex role awareness and behavior toward more or less gender stereotypical responses. Diane N. Ruble and E. Troy Higgins (1976) reviewed the literature on self reports of identification with masculine and feminine traits. They conclude that being in the minority in a group is likely to heighten sex role awareness. This awareness may increase the number of opposite sex stereotypic traits reported if the individual regards androgyny as a desirable goal, but may increase same sex stereotypic identification if polarized femininity or masculinity is regarded as more desirable. While research by Sandra Bem (1975) indicates that the majority of people surveyed identify themselves as primarily androgynous, the situation of the lone female or the lone male in an opposite sex group may bring out gender role stereotypic behavior (Carol Wolman & Hal Frank, 1975; Ruble & Higgins, 1976).

Yerby investigated the influence of sex-role attitudes, group composition and task on female leadership. She found a significant interaction between group members' attitudes toward female leadership and sex composition of the group in determining group member satisfaction with female leaders. She found that women were rated as most highly effective in balanced sex groups whose members had positive attitudes toward female leaders. Thus, attitudes concerning gender stereotypes, as well as the mere presence of various numbers of males and females may significantly alter the impact of gender as a diffuse status characteristic on the responses of group members to female leadership.

In summarizing my position, it is clear that what we call leadership is comprised of a complex of behaviors dependent on the interaction of group members, varying over time and likely to be distributed among members as well

as to be held exclusively by one member. Since current models of leadership have been based on greater experience with male subjects, there is a tendancy to favor those leadership behaviors which are more characteristic of the masculine gender role (Zellman 1976). The significance of this tendancy is that it reflects underlying cultural values and differential behavior norms for men and women which affect our fundamental concepts concerning leadership including who can lead, who should be studied, what is studied and the interpretation of what is found. The domains of research on task or problem solving groups have been the male military, business management and the laboratory.

To neglect the experience of women in groups is to limit our knowledge of how groups operate and how leadership might function. In studying leadership in task oriented or problem solving groups, it might be particularly valuable to look at radical feminist groups because they are consciously experimenting with alternatives to a hierarchical leadership structure in small groups. They rotate leadership in an effort to develop the capabilities and skills of all members and to draw fully from their experiences. They are committed to achieving equality by equitable means. A hierarchical group structure would be antithetical to this principle. They also believe that by maximizing the competency of all members, the group will be more effective, productive and less vulnerable to dissolution by the loss of any one member (Paula Costs Eastman, 1973).

There is some evidence to indicate that rotating leadership may be characteristic of female groups. Elizabeth Aries (1976) found that groups of all women tended to shift leadership over time rather than establish a fixed dominance hierarchy as men did in all male groups. There is additional evidence from the literature on sex differences in coalition formation

to support this notion (Shaw, 1971) but much more research on female groups needs to be done before any conclusions can be drawn. The evidence presented indicates that observed differences in behavior may reflect differences in diffuse status rather than any preference for types of leadership activity. Since women and men do not appear to have an equal number and kind of choices available to them, we can not now draw any conclusions about preferences for what have been identified as leadership activities. We do not know if women are more co-operative in groups and appear more interested in a fair outcome than winning out of necessity or choice (Shaw, 1971).

Michael S. Olmsted and A. Paul Hare (1978) discuss leadership in terms of a variety of roles within a paradigm of group dimensions which takes into account external cultural and social factors as they impact on small groups. This model indicates a fruitful approach to further study. Rather than isolating leadership as an independent phenomenon, we might work on constructing models of interaction inclusive of as many factors as possible that affect individual and group performance. We should also be aware that these factors are likely to change over time as societal values and norms of behavior change.

Much more work needs to be done with all female groups, in addition to experimenting with contexts that minimize the impact of gender role expectations. We might begin by looking at the similarities in the behavior of male and female followers (Patricia Ann Renwick, 1977) contrasted with the common behavior of female and male leaders, while keeping in mind that in any realistic setting there is much ambiquity (Cohen & March, 1974). What are the necessary qualities of human leadership and how do they vary from context to context? How are external cultural norms and values differentially reinforced and acted upon in varying situations? Is the preference for androgyny reported by Bem a reflection of current social trends indicating how people ideally see

themselves and how much does this reported preference affect human behavior in small groups. These are some of the questions that need to be asked in moving toward truly human paradigms of small group behavior. The ultimate goal of feminist scholarship is not to remain isolated as women's studies, but to redefine the mainstream to be inclusive of the experiences of women. Every theory and paradigm of human behavior should be re-examined in terms of range of convenience. That is what does it explain and what does it fail to encompass? As a feminist in the field of interpersonal communication, I am not interested in just applying traditional communication theory and research techniques to women, but in including the experiences of women in the formulation of communication theory and research practices.

REFERENCES

Aries, E. Interaction patterns and themes of male, female, and mixed groups. Small Group Behavior, 1976, 7, 7-18.

Baird, J. E. Sex differences in group communication: A review of relevant research. Quarterly Journal of Speech, 1976, 62, 179-192.

Bartol, K. M. & Butterfield, D. A. Sex effects in evaluating leaders. Journal of Applied Psychology, 1976, 61, 446-454.

Bem, S. L. Sex role adaptability: One consequence of psychological androgyny. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1975, 31, 634-643.

Berger, J. Cohen, B. P. & Zelditch, M. Status characteristics and social interaction. in R. Ofshe (ed.), Interpersonal Behavior in Small Groups. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1973, 194-216.

Berger, J., Conner, T. L. & Fisek, M. H. Expectation states theory: A theoretical Research Program. Cambridge: Winthrop, 1974.

Cirincione-Coles, K. The administrator: Male of female? Journal of Teacher Education, 1975, 26, 326-328.

Cohen, M. D. & March, J. G. Leadership and ambiguity: The American college president. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1974.

Eastman, P. C. Consciousness-raising as a resocialization process for women. Smith College Studies in Social Work, 1973, 43, 153-183.

Eskilson, A. & Wiley, M. G. Sex composition and leadership in small groups. Sociometry, 1976, 39, 194-200.

Frank, H. H. & Katcher, A. H. The qualities of leadership: How male medical students evaluate their female peers. Human Relations, 1977, 30, 403-416.

Frieze, I. H. & Ramsey, S. J. Nonverbal maintenance of traditional sex roles. Journal of Social Issues, 1976, 32, 133-140.

Jacobson, W. D. Power and interpersonal relations. Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth, 1972.

Jacobson, M. B. & Koch, W. Women as leaders: Performance evaluation as a function of method of leader selection. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 1977, 20, 149-157.

Jenkins, L. & Kramer, C. Small group process: Learning from women. Women's Studies: International Quarterly, 1978, 1, (in press).

Johnson, P. Women and power: Toward a theory of effectiveness. Journal of Social Issues, 1976, 32, 99-109.

Kanton R. Men and women of the corporation. Paper presented at the Feminist Scholarship Conference, University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana, February, 1978.

Lockheed, M. E. & Hall, K. P. Conceptualizing sex as a status characteristic: Applications to leadership training strategies. Journal of Social Issues, 1976, 32, 111-123.

McConnell-Ginet, S. Intonation in a man's world. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Mexico City, Mexico, November 20, 1974.

Meeker, B. F. & Weitzel-O'Neill, P. A. Sex roles and interpersonal behavior in task-oriented groups. American Sociological Review, 1977, 42, 91-105.

Olmstead, M. S. & Hare, P. A. The Small Group. New York: Random House, 1978.

Renwick, P. A. The effects of sex differences on the perception and management of superior-subordinate conflict: An exploratory study. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 1977, 19, 403-415.

Rosenfeld, L. B. & Fowler, G. D. Personality, sex and leadership style. Communication Monographs, 1976, 43, 320-324.

Ruble, D. N. & Higgins, E. T. Effects of group sex composition on self-presentation and sex-typing. Journal of Social Issues, 1976, 32, 125-132.

Shaw, M. E. Group dynamics: The psychology of small group behavior. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

Wolman, C. & Frank, H. The solo woman in a professional group. The American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 1975, 45, 164-171.

Yerby, J. Attitude, task, and sex composition as variables affecting female leadership in small problem-solving groups. Speech Monographs, 1975, 42, 160-168.

Zellman, G. L. The role of structural factors in limiting women's institutional participation. Journal of Social Issues, 1976, 32, 33-46.